

finally settled in Laredo, where my grandfather, a French immigrant, married Rachel Pierce Cushman. My grandmother, Claire Jannet Pierce was born here in 1904. The family migrated to Mexico later on, but other part of the family stayed here.

That is why, the last time I was here I got to visit a school that bears the name of my great aunt, Alma Allerton Pierce Elementary.

I can feel this sense of fellowship, supported by a binational, bilingual and bicultural community, that is so characteristic of Laredo.

Our border is one of the busiest and most frequently crossed international borders in the world, but it is way more than a customs and immigration checkpoint.

When we talk about the border, we are also talking about us. We are talking about people that move, that invest, that shop and that socialize across the boundary line.

When we talk about the border we talk about ranchers, railroad builders, miners, investors and immigrants. We talk about thousands of people who cross the border every single day in both directions to work, conduct business, attend school or get medical treatment.

When I come to the border, I see an environment of opportunity defined by social and commercial exchanges, and of common natural landscapes. I also see it as the symbol of our economic stature as a region. Together, the 10 Border States would constitute the world's 4th largest economy.

Dear friends:

We are neighbors by geography, but partners and allies by choice. In less than a century, we transformed mistrust into a strong, collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship.

Our special partnership has made us grow together and prosper together. Today, the great state of Texas has witnessed firsthand the benefits of the close trade with Mexico, twenty-eight years after NAFTA was signed here in San Antonio.

Under NAFTA, exports from Texas to Mexico increased 350%. In a striking comparison, Texas' exports to Mexico are greater than all U.S. exports to Japan and India combined.

Mexico is Texas main trading partner, its first export destination and its number one source of imports.

Our bilateral trade rose to more than 200 billion dollars in 2019 and there are almost half a million Texans whose jobs depend on trade with Mexico.

Moving forward, we are confident that NAFTA successor, the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, USMCA or TMEC, will be a strategic component for economic growth in North America and the ongoing creation of opportunities in cities like Laredo.

With the passing of USMCA, we accomplished three additional objectives:

(1) To support North America's competitiveness, with rules of origin that strengthen regional value chains

(2) To increase trade and investments, and

(3) To restore certainty and stability

Now is the time for implementation and as Laredo is the main port for bilateral trade we have multiple challenges ahead, particularly in the area of infrastructure and personnel for the port, to be able to grasp the opportunities that we have ahead of us.

But when I talk about infrastructure is not only the ports of entry, it's water sanitation, and it is also realizing that we share a common environment and discussing how are we going to deal with the challenges that a border wall will bring to that environment.

We have shared this environment for centuries, and this construction can change it permanently. This is something that we have to reflect on, because, above all, the wall

will be a symbol that will separate us, while our rivers, our landscape and our bridges had united us.

Dear all,

Mexico is well aware that all of the opportunities that stand before us cannot be fully seized, and will not be fully seized, without a careful reconsideration of the difficulties that lie ahead.

There is no silver bullet that will resolve all of our challenges overnight, but we are confident that we are moving in the right direction.

Today, the U.S.-Mexico relationship is at a crossroads, and the decisions that we take from now on will impact the direction of both our countries and the lives of millions of people.

We have sensitive pending issues like migration, where reality requires that we see it, not as a national security problem, but as a phenomenon that can allow us to establish a link between demographic profiles and labor markets.

We are convinced of the necessity of a continuous dialogue, especially on divisive issues, because as long as we remain neighbors, American and Mexican futures will be intertwined.

The role of cities like the two Laredos, its community and its values are key in this shared future. Thank you very much.

HONORING JUSTIN MITCHELL

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 13, 2020

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Justin Mitchell of Franklin-Simpson Middle School, located in Franklin, Kentucky. As an 8th Grade Social Studies teacher, Justin received the American History Teacher of the Year Award from the Kentucky Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This prestigious honor is a testament to the professionalism Justin demands of himself every day and a recognition of the great influence he has had and will continue to have within Franklin-Simpson Middle School.

Active at the state level, working to push education into the future, Justin serves as the Vice Chair of the Education Professional Standards Board and the Assessment and Accountability Council. He continues to organize enriching trips for students to Colonial Williamsburg, VA, and teach at Western Kentucky University's Center for Gifted Studies.

He has committed his career to working with community leaders to improve opportunities for the next generation and ushering in a brighter future for the Commonwealth.

His impact on Simpson County, and public education, cannot be overstated. I've seen the great work Justin Mitchell has done, and join with all of my constituents in the 1st Congressional District of Kentucky in congratulating him.

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO ROBERT E. HILL

HON. MICHAEL GUEST

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 13, 2020

Mr. GUEST. Madam Speaker, I would like to wish Mr. Robert E. Hill a happy 100th birth-

day and recognize his service to our nation as a citizen and veteran. After graduating from Paulett High School in Cooksville, Mississippi in 1939, Mr. Hill joined the United States Army. After completing Basic Training, Mr. Hill served our nation for over four years and saw service during World War II. Mr. Hill served his country honorably on the Italian Peninsula and was a part of the Rome-Arno, Northern Appennines, and Po Valley campaigns. At the end of his service, Mr. Hill held the rank of sergeant. On behalf of our country and state, I would like to thank Mr. Hill for his service to our great nation and wish him a happy birthday.

HONORING AMORY "AMO" HOUGHTON JR.

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 13, 2020

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, Amo Houghton was a dear friend and for many of us, probably the most respected member of Congress from either party. He was thoughtful, positive and constructive. When Congress was bitterly divided during the Newt Gingrich era, it seems almost quaint now, Amo stepped up to bring us together. He was always the voice for civility, thoughtful policy and bipartisanship before that became merely a talking point.

Amo was a modest, quiet, unassuming gentleman. You would never know that he was the only fortune 500 CEO to ever serve in Congress, coming from a distinguished family long successful in business, politics and philanthropy. Yet, he was unpretentious. He cared about good policy and more important than the institution, he cared about the people . . . members and staff.

He was a thoughtful conservative who voted against gimmicks like a balanced-budget amendment despite its popularity with his Republican colleagues. He was against the Iraq war when it had overwhelming support from not just the Bush administration and fellow Republicans, but the majority of the American public.

Amo was ahead of his time in so many ways.

He was deeply concerned about the human dynamic. He didn't just care about "people." He cared about you. He was a strong supporter of the "Faith and Politics" program and efforts at racial reconciliation. His was a unique voice. His positions would be almost unimaginable in today's Congress, but anyone who knew Amo would respect him and more than a few would quietly agree with him.

When I was first elected, I luckily moved into an office next to Amo's. He helped this former freshman member in innumerable ways. His wife Priscilla was herself an amazing person: strong, thoughtful, understated, and civil. She was a dedicated bike rider and was cremated in her favorite dress, wearing a bike pin as did all the ushers at the funeral.

Amo was a consistent voice for people in Congress to do the right thing. He and Priscilla touched many of our lives and made us better people. His participation and example can, and should, live on in this Congress and beyond. His friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, and admirers share a profound sense